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A N
ADDRESS
TO THE
Graduates in Medicine :

DELIVERED
AT A MEDICAL COMMENCEMENT,
IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

Held May 12, 1797.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
THE PRAYER,

Made use of on that Occasion:

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BY JOHN ANDREWS, D. D. VICE PROVOST.

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THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, *who hast created all things, and by whose providence they are upheld and directed ; we, thy rational creatures, esteem it our duty to take all suitable occasions of acknowledging our dependence upon thee, of venerating thy infinite greatness, of adoring thy wisdom and power, and of thanking thee for thy inestimable benefits.*

We are sensible, that we are continually in thy presence, and accountable to thee for all our actions : and, therefore, we feel ourselves interested, in praying " that thou wouldest direct us, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help ; that, in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life."

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Nor do we solicit thy gracious favour and protection for ourselves only ; but, considering ourselves as members of thy great family of mankind, we entreat thee to have mercy on all men. Provide for their necessities ; and grant, that, in all their enjoyments, they may remember thee who art the author of their enjoyments,—and who, at the same time that thou “ givest liberally to all men, upbraidest them not.” Dispose them to consider vice as the greatest, and the most degrading, of all evils ; and the conscientious discharge of all moral duties, as essential to their dignity and happiness. And to this end, hasten, we beseech thee, the time, when the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be universally diffused, and produce its full effect.

But, more especially, we pray for the inhabitants of these United States. Continue to them the blessings of peace, and good government. And, O gracious God, who “ makest men to be of one mind in a house,” a city, or even in a whole nation, heal their divisions ; and dispose them to love one another, as becometh those who are brethren, both by nature and grace,—and who have all one common interest, by being members of the same community.

At this hour of danger to our country, give wisdom, give fortitude, and at the same time mo-

deration, to all those whom we entrust with the exercise of our sovereignty. More particularly, we beseech thee to behold with thy favour the President of the United States. May his administration be happy and glorious :—grant him in health and prosperity long to live ; and finally, after this life, to obtain everlasting felicity.

Bless all schools and seminaries of learning ; that, by them, our youth may be trained up in the fear and love of thy holy name, and be qualified to do much good in their day and generation.

And, finally, we beseech thee to bless the young men whom we are this day about to admit to the honours of this seminary. Grant, that the instructions which have here been bestowed on them, may not be bestowed in vain ; but that they may be the instruments, in thy hands, of restoring health to the sick, and of bidding the heart, which pain or sympathetic sorrow had dejected, sing for joy.

Accept, most merciful God, of these our petitions, which we offer in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord ; who has taught us, when we pray, to say,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven : Give us, this day, our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.



THE GRADUATES, to whom the following ADDRESS was delivered, were :

Dr. WILLIAM ALLSTON, of Georgetown, S. Carolina,
ROBERT BLACK, of Pennsylvania,
JOHN CHURCH, of Philadelphia,
SAMUEL COOPER, of Philadelphia,
BENJAMIN DE WITT, of New-York,
JAMES FISHER, of Delaware,
FRANCIS K. HUGER, of South-Carolina,
SAMUEL JONES, of Philadelphia,
JOSEPH JOHNSON, of Charleston, S. Carolina,
JOHN LAWS, of Delaware,
COLIN MACKENZIE, of Baltimore,
EDWARD NORTH, of South-Carolina,
JOHN EDMONDS STOCK, of Gloucestershire, Eng.
JAMES WALKER, of Virginia,
GOODRIDGE WILSON, of Virginia.

THE ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is natural to expect, that they who are entrusted with the direction of seminaries of learning, must be solicitous for the reputable conduct of those upon whom the honours of such seminaries are bestowed. Hence the custom, which has always prevailed in this place, of taking leave of our graduates, whether in medicine or in the arts, with a parting address, or charge, respecting their conduct in future life ; the words of those whom we esteem being apt to make a deeper and more lasting impression when spoken at that time, than at any other.

On the present occasion, this duty, owing to the indisposition of our venerable provost, has devolved on me :—a circumstance which I regret ;—because I have neither had sufficient lei-

sure, nor (had that been afforded me) sufficient experience, to discharge it properly. It is some consolation, however, to reflect, that such is your own good sense, (which I have heard very highly spoken of;) and such the opportunities of information which you have so long enjoyed in this place, under the most able instructors; as to render the best things that could have been said at this time, in a great measure unnecessary.

That no man is born for himself only, is a maxim which can never be disputed. Every one, who is capable of the least reflection, must be convinced by daily experience, that, without the assistance which he derives from the labours of others, his life must be destitute of comfort, if not of support. And if so, can he reasonably suppose, that he alone is privileged to receive good, but without any obligation on his part to communicate it; to partake in the general welfare, but to do nothing to promote it.

It follows, that it is every man's duty to avoid idleness, and to pursue some profession that is of use to society.

This, Gentlemen, is what you appear to have proposed to yourselves. And the profession you

have chosen, is both honourable and useful. For if health be the first of earthly blessings, and it is generally allowed to be so, then they who instruct us how to preserve it, or restore it to us when lost, deserve to be held in very high estimation.

But, at the same time that we bestow on the profession of medicine this tribute of just praise, we do not hesitate to say, that as, on the one hand, we have much to hope from it, so, on the other, we have something to fear. In the hands of the ignorant and illiterate, of men of weak judgment, and of all, who, either from nature or habit, are averse to study and reflection, it is productive of the most fatal evils. To such practitioners it is owing, that, to this day, it continues to be a matter of debate, whether the profession have, on the whole, done more good or harm to society; and that, in almost all times, even great and highly estimable persons have made it a subject of ridicule. Of this number, I need not inform you, was Pliny, the naturalist; who repeats an ancient inscription upon a tomb, in which the deceased said, that he died of a multitude of physicians, *turba se medicorum periisse*. And speaking of physic, and of those who practised it in his day, "They learn it, says he, at our hazard, and acquire experience at the price of our lives.

No law punishes their ignorance, nor is there any example of their being chastised. Only a physician can murder with absolute impunity." And, to come nearer to our own times, in this number was also Mr. Addison. "We may lay it down as a maxim, says this celebrated writer, that when a nation abounds in physicians, it grows thin of people. Sir William Temple," continues he, "is very much puzzled to find out a reason why the northern hive, as he calls it, does not send out such prodigious swarms, and overrun the world with Goths and Vandals, as it did formerly; but had this excellent author observed, that there were no students in physick among the subjects of Thor and Woden, and that this science very much flourishes in the North at present, he might have found a better solution for this difficulty than any of those he has made use of."

These passages, which probably may have occurred to yourselves in the course of your reading, are not here cited from the same motives with which they appear to have been written, but to impress you more strongly with a sense of the arduousness of the undertaking in which you are about to engage; as well as with a conviction, that, without exerting your best endeavours to qualify yourselves to be useful, you may occa-

sionally be in danger of producing the most serious misfortunes.

Give me leave, therefore, to recommend to you, in the first place, a diligent improvement of your leisure hours, in extending your reading, and acquiring farther and still farther information.

They, who write on grandeur and sublimity, are wont to tell us, that, though real greatness always raises admiration, yet littleness does not excite the contrary passion of contempt; except when we are disappointed by it, and meet with it in a place where we had reason to expect something better. The same remark, with but little variation, may be applied to the subject before us. Want of learning, in a peasant, or mechanick, excites in us no sentiments of contempt. To their occupations learning is not essential; and the poverty in which they are frequently educated, and the necessity, at a more advanced period, of a constant application to manual labour, allow them no opportunity of acquiring it. But an illiterate physician can never fail to be contemptible; because his profession being a learned profession, we expect to find in him a literary character, and are disappointed when it is otherwise.

As medicine, however the invention of it may be ascribed to the Egyptians, was first cultivated as a science in Greece, and, in consequence of this, most of the terms that belong to it are of Greek derivation ; as there are many valuable writings on the subject of medicine in that, and also in the Latin, language ; and as a knowledge of these languages gives us a free access to all the learning of antiquity, and to the most finished models of eloquence in every species of composition ; it will be expected of a physician, in common with other men of learning, to be in some measure acquainted with them. And as every physician should be a writer,—so far at least as to be capable, when an occasion requires it, of communicating his sentiments, by writing, with perspicuity and correctness,—he should be well acquainted with the elements of criticism ; or whatever is comprehended under the terms, grammar, rhetoric, and the belles lettres. He should be no stranger to philosophy ; especially to that branch of it which is called physics, or natural philosophy. All the most approved authors who have written on the subject of his profession, he should read, and continue to read, till every sentiment contained in them be not only comprehended, but rendered familiar to him, and indelibly impressed on his memory. And, lastly, he should cultivate

habits of strict attention, in whatever it may be in which he happens to be engaged ; but more particularly in every occurrence which relates to his practice ; that he may be qualified to profit by his own experience.

In all these branches, you have, we doubt not, made already a considerable proficiency ; but it will require no small degree of application to keep up this proficiency, and to supply what is wanting.

Secondly. We trust, that you will be no less diligent in the cultivation of every moral virtue.

And, under this head, we would particularly recommend to you to cherish Sympathy. Nothing is more odious in any man than that insensibility which wraps him up in himself, and prevents his being moved with either the joys or sorrows of another. In a physician, it is not to be borne with. His abilities may indeed command our respect ; but it is this participation in our joys and sorrows, by which only he can render himself beloved. And the physician, who is beloved by his patients, will always have it in his power to do them the more good. His very presence will soothe their anguish, and his looks and accents impart consolation.

Disinterestedness is another of those virtues, which may be here specified ; as being peculiarly becoming in the character of a physician. By disinterestedness, we do not mean, that, in general, you should have no expectation of being rewarded for your services, or that your reward should not be liberal ; but that, on all proper occasions, you should be willing to assist and relieve your poorer brethren, in the way of your profession as well as otherwise, hoping for no return ; except that, which is indeed the greatest of all others, the approbation of that Being who considers every act of beneficence done to the meanest of his creatures, as done to himself.

What is said by Hippocrates on this subject, is perhaps worthy of your attention : but, how far it is agreeable to the usage of physicians, or might be attended with inconveniencies in practice, I am unable to determine. He is for having the physician to act, in respect to his fees, with honour and humanity, and “ regulate them by the patient’s power to reward them more or less liberally.” In the following sentiment, however, I am confident that you will agree with him. “ There are even occasions,” says he, “ on which a physician ought neither to ask nor to expect reward ; as in the cases of strangers, and the poor, whom all the world are obliged to assist.”

I will mention but one more of these virtues; and it is Candour: which I mention the rather, as the want of it in a physician may, on certain occasions, produce incalculable evil.

Of this virtue, the author whom I have just cited, who was as excellent a man as he was an illustrious physician, may serve as an example. In his writings, he is not ashamed to own, at the expense in some measure of his glory, an error he had committed in dressing a wound on the head; "left," as he observes, "others after him, and by his example, should fall into the same error." Does not this do him more honour, than even all his great learning and capacity? "Little minds," says Celsus, "and men of vulgar abilities do not act in this manner; but are much more careful of the small reputation they have; because they can lose nothing without impoverishing themselves. Only great geniuses, conscious to themselves of the abundance which they otherwise possess are capable of such an acknowledgment, and of neglecting the little losses that diminish nothing of their riches and opulence."

But, thirdly and lastly, I should think myself inexcusable, were I not to recommend to you

a daily attention to the cultivation of pious affections.

HE DOES NOT DESERVE THE NAME OF A RATIONAL CREATURE, AND DOES NOT APPEAR TO KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT GIVES TO HIS NATURE ITS HIGHEST DIGNITY, WHO NEGLECTS TO KEEP UP A CONSTANT COMMUNICATION WITH THE GREAT AUTHOR OF HIS BEING. And, indeed, what exercise can be, in itself, more delightful, than to contemplate the perfections of that Being, who existed from eternity, who created all things, and supplieth all things living with plenteousness; to express our gratitude to him for the benefits which we every moment receive from him; to lift up our hearts unto him who careth for the meanest of his creatures, and pitieth them as a father pitieth his children, to converse with him by prayer, to lay all our wants before him, and to unburthen, as it were, the fulness of our souls in his presence.

I am sensible, that this communication will add nothing to your professional skill; nor can I venture to assure you, that it will give any efficacy to the medicines which you prescribe. But believing, as I do, that religious principle is essential to the happiness of individuals, and to the

very existence of society, I look upon persons, who are any way distinguished by the stations which they hold in society, to be more particularly bound to cherish it in themselves, and (as far, at least, as their *example* can go) to propagate it in others.

Finally, my brethren, the connection, which for some time past has subsisted between us, must henceforth cease. But the time, I trust, will never come, when you will cease, to reflect on that connection with pleasure. On the other hand, I may venture to assure you, that the good wishes of your former instructors will never fail to accompany you. And in their name, as well as in my own, I bid you——FAREWELL.



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